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FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, DRL/IRF, and DRL/SEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KIRF](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAE PRESS WELCOMES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

REF: STATE 128772

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

**¶1.** (U) On September 17, most local English and Arabic dailies in the UAE cited the release of the 2007 U.S. International Religious Freedom (IRF) report prominently and in positive terms. Coverage generally highlighted the report's validation of UAE efforts to promote religious tolerance. The press noted the IRF report's "praise" of UAE efforts at interfaith dialogue, and referred to seminars held under the patronage of President Khalifa bin Zayed on that subject which drew senior Christian and Muslim leaders from the region.

**¶2.** (SBU) Comment: The 2007 report accurately reflects the culture of tolerance that the UAE fosters in terms of permitting various religions to worship in the UAE (subject to the overall caveat that some restrictions are inevitable in a nation that declares Islam as the official religion of the country). These elements of the IRF report are seen as a good news story in the UAE, where most papers published essentially the same positive message. The press did not comment on the IRF report's examples of "anti-Semitic" depictions in the UAE press. End comment.

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